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Triple Play

The slick women's magazines sometimes tend to be as fickle as the fashion changes they report. Curtis Publishing's Ladies' Home Journal, for example, has had three editors in the last three years. But even insiders accustomed to fast editorial changes were caught looking the other way by the speed of the triple play executed last week.

The play began at McCall's (circulation: 8.3 million), which claimed that in an "accommodation agreement" with Curtis, John Mack Carter, 36, McCall's editor for the last three years, had been "released" to become editor of the Ladies' Home Journal (6.6 million). But not happy to leave it at that, Curtis then added that Carter had been "appointed," implying that a raid had taken place. Not so, retorted McCall's president Herbert R. Mayes, who has been most responsible for making it No. 1 among women's magazines. Carter, Mayes said in effect, was fired.

By the end of the week, the only sure loser seemed to be Davis Thomas, 36, who after a year and a half as editor of the Journal was now unemployed. As for the winners, only one emerged clearly—Robert Stein, 40, who, in going from editor of Redbook (circulation: 4 million), which is owned by the McCall Corp., to editor of McCall's magazine, increased his \$42,000 yearly salary by about 30 per cent. All three principals were reluctant to comment. However, an uninvolved but interested bystander, Wade Nichols, editor of Good Housekeeping (5.1 million), offered an observation: "Our own success indirectly precipitated these changes."